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REMARKS

The present response is intended to be fully responsive to all points of objection and/or rejection raised by the Examiner and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

Claims 1 – 33 are pending in the application. Claims 1 – 33 have been rejected. The dependency of claim 23 has been changed.

In this Amendment, Applicants have cancelled claims 1 – 13 and 24 - 33 from further consideration in this application. Applicants are not conceding that the subject matter encompassed by claims 1 – 13 and 24 - 33, prior to this Amendment is not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner. Claims 1 – 13 and 24 - 33 were cancelled in this Amendment solely to facilitate expeditious prosecution of the subject matter of claims 14 - 23. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue claims, including the subject matter encompassed by claims 1 – 13 and 24 - 33, as presented prior to this Amendment and additional claims in one or more continuing applications.

New claims 34 – 45 have been added in order to further define what the Applicants consider to be the invention. Applicants respectfully assert that no new matter has been added.

The Telephone Interview

Initially, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner, C. M. Tarae, for granting and attending the telephone interview, with Applicants' Representative, Heidi M. Brun, Reg. No.

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34,504 on May 29, 2008. In the interview, claim 14 was discussed, as was the Hirose citation.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 – 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Hirose (US Patent 5,710,921). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the remarks that follow.

Claims 1 – 13 and 24 – 33 have been voluntarily cancelled and accordingly their rejection is now moot.

Claim 14 of the present application recites: *“an interface to a collaboration system within which the actors of the current instance of said selected workflow can collaborate.”*

In contrast, Hirose teaches a system that “manages and supports a work flow and provides a job environment for supporting processing by a person in charge of each step” (col. 5, lines 55 – 58). Hirose does not teach or even consider a “collaboration system”. As discussed in the interview, claim 14 recites “in one screen, providing an interface to a workflow system ... and an interface to a collaboration system”. Hirose does not teach nor suggest interfaces to both a workflow system and a collaboration system on a single screen.

In the interest of moving prosecution forward, claim 37 will also be discussed. Hirose does not teach nor suggest *“a collaboration system within which any actor of a current instance of a selected workflow can collaborate with any other actor of said instance.”* Instead, each step in Hirose involves a specific “person in charge”. Even though, as pointed out by the Examiner during the Interview, in col. 14, lines 1 – 3, Hirose says “Also, the person in charge inserts a message destined for the person in charge of the next step into the ‘Comment’ field of the packet as required”, this commenting ability does not provide *“any actor ... can collaborate with any other actor of said instance”*.

Accordingly, Applicants assert that Hirose does not teach nor suggest the limitations of claim 14 nor of new claim 37. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that independent claims 14 and 37 are allowable. Claims 15 – 23 and 37 – 45 depend from, directly or

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indirectly, claims 14 and 37 and therefore include all the limitations of those claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 15 – 23 and 37 – 45 are likewise allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections to claims 14 – 23 and allow claims 14 – 23 and 37 – 45.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the ending claims are deemed to be allowable. Their favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below. Similarly, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned counsel.

Respectfully submitted,

By: /Suzanne Erez/
Suzanne Erez
Reg. No. 46,688
Phone No. (972) 4-829-6069

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IBM Corporation
Intellectual Property Law Dept.
P. O. Box 218
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598